REMARKS

Claims 1, 3 to 16 and 18 to 35 are in the application with Claims 1, 3 to 7, 9 to 16 and 18 to 35 having been amended. Favorable review and passage to issue are respectfully requested.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the courtesies and thoughtful treatment extended to Applicant's representative during the April 20, 2001 telephonic interview. This amendment has been prepared in accordance with the discussions and agreements reached during that interview.

In the Office Action dated October 24, 2000, Claims 1, 3 to 16 and 18 to 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent 5,625,757 (Kageyama). Claims 1, 16 and 30 to 35 have been amended to include the feature of limiting the first data which can be designated by the user so that at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses is selected each time an image output job is to be output. Kageyama is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the foregoing feature and therefore Claims 1, 16 and 30 to 35 are believed to be allowable over Kageyama.

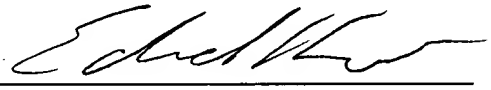
Claims 3 to 7, 9 to 15 and 18 to 29 have also been amended for consistency with the amendments to their

respective base claim and to address various informalities noted in a review of the claims.

Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue are respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicant

Registration No. 42,746

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-2200
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

CA_MAIN 21587 v 1

OIPE JC139
APR 25 2001
PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO CLAIMS

1. (Twice Amended) A data processing apparatus having connection means for being connected to a plurality of image output apparatuses, comprising:

[producing means for producing an image output job;

designating] first obtaining means for [designating a] obtaining first [selection condition] data [by a user] associated with an image output job, the first data being designated by an operator;

limiting means for limiting the first data which can be designated by the operator;

second obtaining means for obtaining second data from the image output job, the second data not being designated by the operator;

selection means for selecting an image output apparatus, [which can perform output operation in accordance with a content of said image output job and said selection condition data] based on the first data and the second data, from the plurality of image output apparatuses [connected by said connection means]; and

job assigning means for assigning [an] the image output

RECEIVED
APR 27 2001
Technology Center 2600

job to the image output apparatus selected by said selection means,

wherein the first data is limited by the limiting means so that the selection means selects at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses each time an image output job is to be output.

3. (Twice Amended) The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said selection means selects the image output apparatus further based on [a] states of the image output [apparatus is provided as a second selection condition data] apparatuses.

4. (Twice Amended) The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said selection means [include] comprises confirmation means for confirming a function of each of the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means, and selects [an] the image output apparatus having the function to perform an output operation [in accordance with said content of the image output job and said first selection condition data] corresponding to the first and second data.

5. (Amended) The data processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said confirmation means confirms the function of each of the plurality of image output apparatuses by referring to a memory which stores [storing,] in advance[,] data indicative of the function of each of the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means.

6. (Amended) The data processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said confirmation means confirms the function of each of the plurality of image output apparatuses by communicating with each of the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means.

7. (Twice Amended) The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein in a case where the [content of the image output job] first data designates to select an image output apparatus which completes execution of the image output job in a short time period, said selection means selects an image output apparatus which can perform the output operation in [accordance with the content of the image output job] a short time period, based on [the] a state of the image output job assigned to each of the image output apparatuses and the [content of the image output job] second data.

8. (Not Changed From Prior Version) The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising display means for displaying a message regarding an execution state of the image output job assigned to each of the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means.

9. (Twice Amended) The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein in a case where the [content of the image output job] first data designates to select an image output apparatus capable of a color image output, said selection means confirms [the] a function of each of the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means and selects an image output apparatus which can perform [output operation in accordance with the content of the image output job] the color image output.

10. (Twice Amended) The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein in a case where the [content of the image output job] first data designates to select [a printer] an image output apparatus capable of printing on both[-]sides of a recording medium [printing], said selection means confirms [the] a function of each of the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means and selects [a printer serving

as] an image output apparatus which can perform the printing on both sides of the recording medium [printing in accordance with the content of the image output job].

11. (Twice Amended) The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein in a case where the first data designates a size of an output image [is designated by the content of the image output job], said selection means confirms [the] a function of each of the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means and selects an image output apparatus which can perform an output operation in [accordance with the image output job] the designated size.

12. (Twice Amended) The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein in a case where there are plural image output apparatuses which can perform an output operation [in accordance with the content of the image output job] corresponding to the first and second data, said selection means selects one of the plural image output apparatuses based on priorities set in advance.

13. (Twice Amended) The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein in a case where there are plural

image output apparatuses which can perform an output operation [in accordance with the content of the image output job] corresponding to the first and second data, said selection means allows an operator to select one of the plural image output apparatuses.

14. (Twice Amended) The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein in a case where the [content of the image output job includes] first data designates plural output forms, said selection means selects an image output apparatus which can perform an output operation in all of the plural output forms.

15. (Amended) An image output system comprising the data processing apparatus [disclosed in] according to claim 1 and a plurality of image output apparatuses connected to the data processing apparatus by said connection means.

16. (Twice Amended) A data processing method for executing an image output job by selecting one of a plurality of image output apparatuses, comprising the steps of:

[producing an image output job;]

[receiving for designating data as a] obtaining first

[selection condition] data associated with an image output job, [by a user] the first data being designated by an operator;

limiting the first data which can be designated by the operator;

obtaining second data from the image output job, the second data not being designated by the operator;

selecting an image output apparatus, [which can perform output operation in accordance with said image output job and first selection condition data] based on the first and second data, from the plurality of [selectable] image output apparatuses; and

assigning the image output job to the image output apparatus selected in said selecting step,

wherein the first data is limited so that the selecting step selects at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses each time an image output job is to be output.

18. (Twice Amended) The data processing method according to claim 16, wherein in said selecting step, an image output apparatus is selected further based on [a state of the image output job assigned to each] states of the image output apparatuses[, in addition to said content of the image output job and said first selection condition data].

19. (Twice Amended) The data processing method according to claim 16, wherein said selecting step comprises a step of confirming a function of each of the plurality of [selectable] image output apparatuses, and selects an image output apparatus having a function to perform an output operation [in accordance with said content of the image output job and said first selection condition data] corresponding to the first and second data.

20. (Amended) The data processing method according to claim 19, wherein in said confirming step, the function of each of the plurality of image output apparatuses is confirmed by referring to a memory [storing,] which stores in advance[,] data indicative of the function of each of the [selectable] image output apparatuses.

21. (Amended) The data processing method according to claim 19, wherein in said confirming step, the function of each of the plurality of image output apparatuses is confirmed by communicating with each of the [selectable] image output apparatuses.

22. (Twice Amended) The data processing method

according to claim 16, wherein in a case where the [content of the image output job] first data designates to select an image output apparatus which completes execution of the image output job in a short time period, in said selecting step, an image output apparatus which can perform an output operation in [accordance with the content of the image output job and the first selection condition data] a short time period is selected based on [the] a state of the image output job assigned to each of the image output apparatuses and the [content of the image output job] second data.

23. (Amended) The data processing method according to claim 16, further comprising a step of displaying a message regarding an execution state of the image output job assigned to each of the [selectable] image output apparatuses.

24. (Twice Amended) The data processing method according to claim 16, wherein in a case where the [content of the image output job] first data designates to select an image output apparatus capable of a color image output, in said selecting step, [the] a function of each of the [selectable] image output apparatuses is confirmed, and an image output apparatus which can perform [output operation in accordance with

the content of the image output job and the first selection condition data] the color image output is selected.

25. (Twice Amended) The data processing method according to claim 16, wherein in a case where the [content of the image output job] first data designates to select [a printer] an image output apparatus capable of printing on both[-]sides of a recording medium [printing], in said selecting step, [the] a function of each of the [selectable] image output apparatuses is confirmed and [a printer serving as] an image output apparatus which can perform the printing on both sides of the recording medium [printing in accordance with the content of the image output job and the first selection condition data] is selected.

26. (Twice Amended) The data processing method according to claim 16, wherein in a case where the first data designates a size of an output image [is designated by the content of the image output job], in said selecting step, [the] function of each of the [selectable] image output apparatuses is confirmed and an image output apparatus which can perform an output operation in [accordance with the content of the image output job and the first selection condition data] the designated size is selected.

27. (Twice Amended) The data processing method according to claim 16, wherein in a case where there are plural image output apparatuses which can perform an output operation [in accordance with the content of the image output job] corresponding to the first and second data, one of the plural image output apparatuses is selected in said selecting step based on priorities set in advance.

28. (Twice Amended) The data processing method according to claim 16, wherein in a case where there are plural image output apparatuses which can perform an output operation [in accordance with said content of the image output job and said first selection condition data] corresponding to the first and second data, one of the plural image output apparatuses is selected in said selecting step based on an instruction input[ted] by an operator.

29. (Twice Amended) The data processing method according to claim 16, wherein in a case where [said content of the image output job and said first selection condition data includes] the first data designates plural output forms, an image output apparatus which can perform an output operation in all [condition] of the plural output forms is selected in said

selecting step.

30. (Twice Amended) A data processing apparatus having connection means for being connected to a plurality of image output apparatuses, comprising:

[producing means for producing an image output job;

designating] first obtaining means for [designating a] obtaining first [selection condition] data associated with an image output job, [by a user] the first data being designated by an operator;

limiting means for limiting the first data which can be designated by the operator;

second obtaining means for obtaining second data from the image output job, the second data not being designated by the operator; and

selection means for selecting an image output apparatus, [which can perform output operation in accordance with a content of said image output job and said first selection condition data] based on the first data and the second data, from the plurality of image output apparatuses [connected by said connection means],

wherein the first data is limited by the limiting means so that the selecting means selects at least one of the plurality

of image output apparatuses each time an image output job is to be output.

31. (Twice Amended) A data processing method for executing an image output job by selecting one of a plurality of image output apparatuses, comprising the steps of:

[producing an image output job;

designating a] obtaining first [selection condition] data associated with an image output job, [by a user] the first data being designated by an operator;

limiting the first data which can be designated by the operator;

obtaining second data from the image output job, the second data not being designated by the operator; and

selecting an image output apparatus, [which can perform output operation in accordance with a content of said image output job and said first selection condition data] based on the first and second data, from the plurality of [selectable] image output apparatuses,

wherein the first data is limited so that the selecting step selects at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses each time an image output job is to be output.

32. (Twice Amended) A memory medium storing program code[s] for controlling a data processing apparatus which includes connection means for being connected to a plurality of image output apparatuses, the program code [for causing the data processing apparatus to operate as an apparatus] comprising the steps of:

[producing means for producing an image output job;

designating means for designating a] obtaining first [selection condition] data associated with an image output job, [by a user] the first data being designated by an operator;

limiting the first data which can be designated by the operator;

obtaining second data from the image output job, the second data not being designated by the operator;

[selection means for] selecting an image output apparatus, [which can perform output operation in accordance with a content of said image output job and said first selection condition data] based on the first and second data, from the plurality of image output apparatuses [connected by said connection means]; and

[job assignment means for] assigning [an] the image output job to the image output apparatus selected [by] in said [selection means] selecting step,

wherein the first data is limited so that the selecting step selects at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses each time an image output job is to be output.

33. (Twice Amended) A program for controlling a data processing apparatus having connection means for being connected to a plurality of image output apparatuses, the program [for causing the data processing apparatus to operate as an apparatus,] comprising the steps of;

[producing an image output job;

designating a] obtaining first [selection condition] data [by a user] associated with an image output job, the first data being designated by an operator;

limiting the first data which can be designated by the operator;

obtaining second data from the image output job, the second data not being designated by the operator;

[selection means for] selecting an image output apparatus, [which can perform output operation in accordance with a content of said image output job and said first selection condition data] based on the first and second data, from the plurality of image output apparatuses [connected by said connection means]; and

[job assignment means for] assigning [an] the image output job to the image output apparatus selected [by] in said [selection means] selecting step,

wherein the first data is limited so that the selecting step selects at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses each time an image output job is to be output.

34. (Twice Amended) A memory medium storing program code[s] for controlling a data processing apparatus which includes connection means for being connected to a plurality of image output apparatuses, the program [for causing the data processing apparatus to operate as an apparatus] comprising the steps of:

[producing means for producing an image output job;

designating means for designating a] obtaining first [selection condition] data [by a user] associated with an image output job, the first data being designated by an operator;

limiting the first data which can be designated by the operator;

obtaining second data from the image output job, the second data not being designated by the operator; and

[selection means for] selecting an image output apparatus, [which can perform output operation in accordance with

a content of said image output job and said first selection condition data] based on the first and second data, from the plurality of image output apparatuses [connected by said connection means],

wherein the first data is limited so that the selecting step select at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses each time an image output job is to be output.

35. (Twice Amended) A program for controlling a data processing apparatus having connection means for being connected to a plurality of image output apparatuses, [for causing the data processing apparatus to operate as an apparatus] the program comprising the steps of:

[producing an image output job;

designating a] obtaining first [selection condition] data [by a user] associated with an image output job, the first data being designated by an operator;

limiting the first data which can be designated by the operator;

obtaining second data from the image output job, the second data not being designated by the operator; and

[selection means for] selecting an image output apparatus, [which can perform output operation in accordance with

a content of said image output job and said first selection condition data] based on the first and second data, from the plurality of image output apparatuses [connected by said connection means],

wherein the first data is limited so that the selecting step selects at least one of the plurality of image output apparatuses each time an image output job is to be output.

CA_MAIN 18815 v 1